

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A computer-implemented method for providing access to functions of a portable
 2 information appliance, comprising:
 3 while the portable information appliance is operating in a configuration mode,
 4 converting input signals from a microphone to a first data set representing a voice of an
 5 authorized user and storing the first data set in the portable information appliance; and
 6 while the portable information appliance is operating in a standby mode,
 7 converting input signals from the microphone to a second data set representing sound
 8 detected at the microphone, and if the first data set matches the second data set, providing
 9 access to functions of the portable information appliance. (col. 8, lines 15-45)

1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 2 automatically placing the portable information appliance into an operations mode
 3 if the first data set matches the second data set; and
 4 while the portable information appliance is operating in the operations mode,
 5 converting input signals from the microphone to a third data set representing sound
 6 detected at the microphone and storing the third data set for subsequent playback.

1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
 2 comparing the third data set to each of a plurality of recorder-command data sets,
 3 wherein each of the recorder-command data sets is associated with a sound recorder
 4 function performed by the portable information appliance; and
 5 performing the sound recorder function associated with a recorder-command data
 6 set that matches the third data set.

1 4. The method of claim 2, further comprising automatically returning the portable
 2 information appliance to the standby mode after a selected period of inactivity.

1 5. The method of claim 2, further comprising returning the portable information
 2 appliance to the standby mode in response to a user input signal.

1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising
 2 while the portable information appliance is operating in the configuration mode,
 3 converting input signals from a microphone to a plurality of first data sets representing
 4 voices of a plurality of authorized users and storing the plurality of first data sets in the
 5 portable information appliance; and
 6 if any of the plurality of first data sets matches the second data set, providing
 7 access to functions of the portable information appliance. ✓

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising automatically placing the portable
 2 information appliance in the standby mode when power is initially applied to the ✓
 3 appliance.

1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 2 entering a program-button mode in response to a selected user input signal while
 3 the portable information appliance is operating in the operations mode;
 4 associating a user-specified set of functions with a user-selected programmable
 5 button while the portable information appliance is operating in the program-button mode;
 6 and
 7 performing the set of user-specified functions associated with a programmable
 8 button in response to a user selection of the programmable button while the portable
 9 information appliance is operating in the operations mode.

1 9. The method of claim 4, further comprising automatically placing the appliance in a
 2 power saving mode after a second selected period of inactivity.
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1 10. A system for providing access to functions of a portable information appliance, the
 2 system comprising:
 3 means for converting input signals from a microphone to a first data set
 4 representing a voice of an authorized user and storing the first data set in the portable
 5 information appliance, while the portable information appliance is operating in a
 6 configuration mode; and

7 means for converting input signals from the microphone to a second data set
8 representing sound detected at the microphone and, if the first data set matches the second
9 data set, means for accessing the functions of the portable information appliance, while the
10 portable information appliance is operating in a standby mode. ✓

1 11. A computer-implemented method for providing access to functions of a portable
2 information appliance, comprising:

3 while the portable information appliance is operating in a configuration mode,
4 converting input signals from a biometric module to a first data set representing a
5 biometric characteristic of an authorized user and storing the first data set in the portable
6 information appliance; and

7 while the portable information appliance is operating in a standby mode,
8 converting input signals from the biometric module to a second data set representing the
9 biometric characteristic detected at the biometric module, and if the first data set matches
10 the second data set, providing access to functions of the portable information appliance. ✓
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1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the biometric module includes a fingerprint
2 sensing pad adapted to convert the input signals into a data set representing the biometric
3 characteristic of the authorized user.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the biometric module includes a retinal scanning
2 device adapted to convert the input signals into a data set representing the biometric
3 characteristic of the authorized user.

1 14. The method of claim 11, wherein the biometric module includes a microphone and
2 a digital signal processor that interface with a memory arrangement to recognize a voice of
3 the user. ✓

1 15. A system for providing access to functions of a portable information appliance,
2 comprising:
3 means for converting input signals from a biometric module to a first data set
4 representing a biometric characteristic of an authorized user and storing the first data set in

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5 the portable information appliance, while the portable information appliance is operating
6 in a configuration mode; and

7 means for converting input signals from the biometric module to a second data set
8 representing the biometric characteristic detected at the biometric module, and if the first
9 data set matches the second data set, means for accessing the functions of the portable
10 information appliance, while the portable information appliance is operating in a standby
11 mode. ✓